

LESSON IN PROTECTING HERSELF ON A NIGHT OUT



GIRL POWER: Geraldine demonstrates how even a petite blonde can take on a burly attacker



TRIGGER HAPPY: Our reporter Geraldine tackles a would-be gunman



"They usually only approach you in the first place because you look vulnerable. They expect you to be a victim."

After a few minutes stabbing the lads with car keys and fingernails, I was ready to wallop them with my handbag. If ever I needed an excuse to splurge on a designer bag, this was it, it would earn its keep.

But I got my best kicks from using my heels. Patrick pointed out that they make an excellent weapon - even when you're not wearing them.

"You can take them off and hit someone in the face with them, or even fling them."

Still, even my killer stilettos would be no match for a real one. So the lads showed me how to fend off a knife-wielding yob.

Dave pretended to stab me but I shoved his arm away. "Once you've

practised this a few times, it will come naturally," Patrick said. "Krav Maga uses your instinctive reaction and fine-tunes it so you defend yourself without having to remember complicated manoeuvres."

Gunman

Next up was a gun-fight, except I was unarmed. I learned to push the gunman's arm away with one hand and used my other hand to flick the pistol back. "Do that fast and you'll snap his finger, because it's trapped in the trigger," Patrick explained.

But his top tip is not to get into a fight in the first place. "Run away first. If they grab you and you can't get away, then you have to fight back, but only to give yourself a chance to run off.

"And never, ever let anyone drag you into a car. Once they take you away, you're finished. I tell my students 'die here, not there'. At least you've some chance someone will see you. And don't panic," he adds.

It's easier said than done, especially as most muggers strike at night. "We turn off the lights during the course to simulate being attacked in the dark. It's very frightening to have someone come up behind you in alley, and your first instinct is normally to freeze," Patrick points out.

He has also trained blind people. "They know they can walk the streets safely."

And so was I as I walked to the car park in my high heels.

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